



Border Security Conference & Expo
Phoenix Convention Center
Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer
March 6, 2012

Good morning, everyone ... and welcome to Phoenix!

I'm very grateful for the opportunity to be with you today.

I'm grateful because it gives me an opportunity to say "thank you" for your great devotion to the security of our nations' borders.

Your courage and devotion are an inspiration to me – and the citizens of this great state – and I'm honored to be able stand here in front of you this morning – many of you from all parts of the globe – and say "thank you" for keeping us safe.

You may be aware that the State of Arizona recently celebrated its one hundredth birthday.

And I'm proud to say that Arizona has entered its Centennial Year with many wonderful gifts and blessings – including an extraordinary economic and fiscal recovery.

For the first time in years our state budget is balanced and Arizona is producing large numbers of new jobs.

In fact, Arizona's job growth over the last year ranked 11th best nationally. Even the Phoenix housing market has stabilized, with home values climbing once again.

All of this is evidence that the Arizona Comeback is more than rhetoric – it's a reality.

But, there's another reality I want to address this morning.

I stand here today aiming to make a simple case on the subject of America's border with Mexico and our illegal immigration policy. I know my words will be distorted by those who disagree.

My opponents have already painted me as hard-hearted and uncompassionate.

They're wrong.

My career, my record, my life ... all stand as proof as to how wrong the critics are.

The truth I've come to share with you is anything but hateful.

It has nothing to do with skin color, nothing to do with extremism.

Instead, it's rooted in freedom.

My truth shares the spirit of our Founding Father's quest to "form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty."

We must secure Arizona's and America's southern border.

That is my truth.

We must secure our border to keep our citizens safe.

We must secure our border because we are a nation of laws.

We must secure our border to ensure our vital and valuable and continuing relationship with Mexico.

There is no other choice, no better option.

There is no next-best, easier truth.

Of course, there are those in Washington who will tell you ... from 3,000 miles away ... that our border is more secure than ever.

Tell that to the survivors and friends of Robert Krentz, a dedicated, community-minded man shot to death on the same Cochise County ranch his family has called home for more than 100 years.

Tell that to the friends and relatives of a brave and noble border patrol agent – Agent Brian Terry – a victim of a border gang that was armed by our own federal government – allowing guns to be shipped into Mexico in the scandalous Fast-and-Furious Operation.

Tell that to the Arizonans who wake up to find a drop house raid in progress, or who witness high-speed chases on our freeways and in our neighborhoods, or who spend hours in an overburdened emergency room on a Saturday night, waiting while consoling a suffering child.

Tell that to our taxpayers, forced to bear the expenses – including state and federal prison cells overflowing with thousands of illegal alien felons – at a total cost of more than one billion dollars each year.

Those are the facts, plain and simple.

Our opponents, the self-styled do-gooders, try mightily to bury them. They spin and shout, hate and denounce.

To disagree with them, I've learned, is to suffer incredible verbal abuse.

But, let me assure you, I can live with those consequences, because I believe in the truth and I believe in taking action to protect our hard-won freedoms. Besides, no amount of distortion can hide the absolute truth.

The federal government – Republicans and Democrats alike – has failed every single American. All of us.

Washington's abdication of responsibility is the overarching outrage of America's illegal immigration crisis.

America's failure to understand this problem at a national level – and deal with it – has haunted border states like mine for decades.

For years, Washington has stood idly by, letting our southern border grow more porous and more dangerous.

For years, they've tolerated a situation that every day encourages the wanton violation of our neighborhoods' integrity and safety.

The freedom I believe in should be protected by a framework of laws enforced consistently and impartially.

I believe in a prosperity that should be enjoyed by all – on both sides of the border.

I believe in a relationship with Mexico that celebrates a partnership – one that encourages a dynamic trading environment – a testament to international understanding and friendship.

For that to happen, there must be commitment on both sides of the line. Without that commitment, we will have only more of the same.

If Arizona and America are to thrive over the next two decades, Arizona, Washington, D.C., and Mexico must work to create a legal and secure framework to grow our economy and Mexico's together.

Arizona needs a border that is secure in preventing illegal immigration but effective in promoting swift and easy legal entry.

We need ports of entry that facilitate the efficient transaction of goods and products between Arizona and Mexico, our largest trading partner.

We cannot allow outdated ports of entry to result in excessive wait times that push legal commerce and industry to other states.

We are making progress. Our largest commercial crossing at Mariposa will go from 4 to 12 passenger lanes this year, and is doubling its number of commercial inspection lanes.

Likewise, we have just recently completed expansion at the Lukeville port of entry and opened a brand new commercial port of entry at San Luis II.

But we can't stop there.

Last month, I traveled to Rocky Point, Mexico and joined my good friend Governor Padres to meet with business and government leaders representing Arizona and Sonora.

I told them that our two states represent a border region, and this region is competing worldwide for jobs and economic development.

A secure border – one that blocks criminal trafficking but facilitates legal trade and commerce – is not contrary to our shared goal of economic prosperity.

It is simply essential. Essential!

In closing, let me say that with the help of individuals like those of you in this room today, we'll continue to push for an effective border that protects our citizens while welcoming tourism, trade and commerce.

We'll push for a border that aids Arizona's economic growth – and Mexico's economic growth, without enabling the crime that threatens our citizens.

And, we'll push for the federal government to finally fulfill its obligations to the American people when it comes to securing our border and enforcing our nation's immigration laws.

**Standing strong with all of you, I know we can do this.
Again, thank you all for being here.**

May God bless you and the great state Arizona.

**And may God always bless and protect the United States
of America.**

Thank you.